

Three dolls representing Indigenous women and a child are standing on a patch of green grass. The doll on the left wears a light blue tunic with a red and black geometric patterned sash. The middle doll wears a purple tunic with orange beaded trim and a blue and white patterned skirt. The doll on the right wears a red tunic with blue beaded trim and a white lace skirt. All dolls have dark hair and are wearing traditional Indigenous jewelry. The background is a mix of green grass and a purple textured overlay.

ONTARIO'S 2021-22 PATHWAYS TO SAFETY PROGRESS REPORT

MARCH 2022

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MINISTERS' MESSAGE

Events over the past year have solidified our government's determination to advance reconciliation and renew relationships with Indigenous people. The intergenerational trauma caused by the Indian Residential School system has directly contributed to the numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and continues to affect Indigenous children, youth, families and communities.

Our government is taking action to confront and eliminate the root causes of violence so future generations of Indigenous women, children, Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, plus (2SLGBTQQIA+) people and their families are safe to live their lives free from fear. As outlined in this report, advances have been made on many key initiatives in our government's strategy [Pathways to Safety: Ontario's Strategy in Response to the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#), released last year, and several new initiatives have been added.

The advances are a testament to the ongoing collaboration with Indigenous partners and communities. In the face of challenges on many fronts, we are inspired by partners' tireless leadership and advocacy within their communities to advance this critical work.

We also wish to acknowledge the efforts of partner ministries that have made this progress possible and demonstrated the power of working across government in conjunction with Indigenous partners to achieve a common vision.

While we recognize that much work still lies ahead, we are confident that the strong foundation we have built based on accountability and relationships will help bring about the changes needed to create a secure future where all Indigenous women and girls live in safety, free from violence and exploitation.

The Honourable Jane McKenna
Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues

The Honourable Greg Rickford
Minister of Indigenous Affairs

MESSAGE FROM THE INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

Power and Place: Indigenous Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People's Leadership

The urgent need to create a safe society for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people is always on our minds and in our hearts as we advise the Ontario government. The safety of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people was paramount to the development of Ontario's Pathways to Safety. It is imperative that we do not lose focus on changing the attitudes, practices and policies that led to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons. To uncover a pathway to healing that is attainable, we must do the hard work of creating systems that truly foster safety and well-being for Indigenous communities.

This past year has been an extraordinarily difficult one for Indigenous people and communities. The pandemic has significantly impacted the safety and well-being of First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities. It brought to the forefront the systemic disparities and gaps in services experienced by Indigenous women, and rates of violence against Indigenous women rose. Throughout this time, the horrors of the residential school system gained national and international attention, painfully resurfacing trauma for many. It reminded us how the horrific experiences of children who attended these schools resulted in intergenerational trauma that has contributed to ongoing gender-based violence and is intricately connected to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons. These realities remind us of the importance of this work and the urgency that must be placed in implementing Pathways to Safety.

Even with these tremendous challenges, in this past year we have witnessed the profound leadership Indigenous women continue to provide and the powerful changes being made in communities. The safety of Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons are at the heart of our work. The voices and experiences of families, survivors, Indigenous women and children guide everything we do, and we will continue to work with Ontario to inform government action.

Our path is one of respectful collaboration. The focus of this first progress report, Accountability and Relationships, reflects this commitment. We have taken first steps together, but much more needs to be done. As Council, we will continue to advocate so every Indigenous woman, child and 2SLGBTQQIA+ person has the supports they need to reclaim their rightful power and place. Working together, we will bring an end to this crisis and build safe and respectful pathways for the generations to come.

Indigenous Women's Advisory Council

Mandate: The [Indigenous Women's Advisory Council](#), created in June 2020, provides guidance and input on violence prevention priorities within the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues mandate, including human trafficking, child, youth and family well-being, Ontario's response to the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and broader violence prevention.

Council Members

- Cora-lee McGuire-Cyrette (Co-Chair), Ontario Native Women's Association
- Sandra Montour (Co-Chair), Six Nations of the Grand River
- Gertie Mai Muise, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres
- Amanda Kilabuk, Tungasuvvingat Inuit
- Lyndia Jones, Independent First Nations
- Chief Laurie Carr, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians
- Nancy Johnson, Chiefs of Ontario
- Jennifer St. Germain, Métis Nation of Ontario
- Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum, Nishnawbe Aski Nation
- Rebecca Timms, Anishinabek Nation – interim member
- Debbie Lipscombe, Grand Council Treaty #3 – interim member

HONOURING SURVIVORS

Ontario honours the Indigenous women, daughters, sisters, mothers, grandmothers, friends, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and family members who are no longer with us. We also acknowledge and honour the survivors of gender-based violence, families of lost loved ones, the leaders who fought for the National Inquiry and those who continue to lead healing and reconciliation efforts in communities across Ontario. You are in our hearts and minds, guiding our actions as we commit to sustained, transformative change and to ending this crisis. Ontario will continue its work to build a province where all Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people live in safety and security, free from violence and exploitation.

Nishnawbe Aski Police Service

"Statistics in our country indicate that Indigenous women are 3 times more likely to endure some type of violence in their lifetime. With this fact, it is more likely that Indigenous women would need survivor care after a traumatic event. And who better to provide that support than another Indigenous woman who has fought a similar fight and has changed for the better?

The Survivor Assistance Support Program (SASP) was created to focus solely on the immediate needs of the survivors from the vast northern region of Ontario. In our focus to assist those in the less resourced areas within the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Territory, we press on with the belief and compassion needed to fully understand and support the unique needs of these brave women who come forward to report their abuse.

Further, we hope to better support First Nation communities to deal with the shadow of the MMIWG and the uncovering of mass graves associated with the Indian Residential Schools. SASP chooses to focus on supporting Indigenous women in both domestic and sexual offence cases. The vision in the end is creating a healthier outcome to better deal with the external influences of colonialism going forward.

As the creator of SASP, it is my belief that a large part of the change in our country starts with survivor services and who an individual comes into contact with first and how they are treated. With this heavy load, it is my hope that this program carries on doing its important work permanently in Ontario and for the support of its officers who work with our survivors within the jurisdiction of the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service."

**Alana Morrison #1220, Detective Sergeant for the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service,
creator and Supervisor of SASP**

INTRODUCTION

Over the past year, the legacy of the Indian Residential School system continued to haunt and retraumatize Indigenous communities and people across Ontario and Canada.

In May 2021, unmarked burials were uncovered in British Columbia near the site of the Kamloops Indian Residential School on the lands of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation. There are 18 former federally recognized residential school locations in Ontario where at least 426 children are known to have died, with an unknown number still missing. To date, 12 unmarked burials have been identified and there are likely to be more as the Indigenous and Survivor-lead work gets underway at these 18 sites across the province.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a disproportionate impact on First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. Indigenous women faced additional challenges including a rise in domestic violence due to the increased need to stay home and socially isolate. Access to supports were also limited due to public health restrictions. The causes of violence against Indigenous women, children, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, are complex and challenging. We need to confront the root causes and address the gaps in Ontario's current systems that have resulted in Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experiencing poorer outcomes in education, fewer employment opportunities, higher rates of homelessness, greater risk of being targeted by human traffickers, and an increased need for mental health and well-being services.

Ontario recognizes these are inter-related and interdependent issues requiring a government-wide response. Ontario will help drive further change by reinforcing our commitment to truth and reconciliation, addressing structural harms, and supporting the healing journey of survivors and their families. The province is committed to listening and acting on the guidance and wishes of Indigenous women, residential school Survivors, Elders and Knowledge Holders, leaders, and communities. This deeper understanding and commitment to ongoing learning and action will guide our path toward reconciliation.



Indigenous Victim and Family Liaison program

Ontario Native Women's Association's Indigenous Victim and Family Liaison (IVFL) program provides support and guidance to the families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and provides a full range of individual advocacy and supports to those who have been victimized and have experienced various forms of abuse.

93 per cent of Indigenous women accessing this program were engaged in prevention-based services, 67 per cent of Indigenous women were supported to exit domestic violence situations, 124 safety plans were completed for Indigenous women and their families, and 8 women gained independent housing after fleeing domestic violence.

"I have never felt so supported and had someone help me so quickly. Thank you for everything you have done by helping me in such difficult systems and advocating for me and my voice. There are butterflies around us, that means our Ancestors and Spirits are with us. We are being heard...good things are happening."

- Client statement

BUILDING A RESPECTFUL FOUNDATION THROUGH ACCOUNTABILITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

This year's progress report reflects the government's commitment to the collaborative implementation of Pathways to Safety. It is focused on increasing accountability and building relationships. Accountability to the families of missing and murdered loved ones, survivors of gender-based violence, and Indigenous communities across the province is critical to creating sustainable and systemic change.

Since the release of Pathways to Safety, Ontario has continued to enhance strong relationships with the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council and grow relationships with Indigenous partners involved in the development of various initiatives and relationship tables. Together with the Council, Ontario has begun designing and implementing accountability mechanisms to effectively monitor progress from a common standpoint.

The strategy's six pathways and core principles provide a solid foundation for this collaboration, recognizing that ending the ongoing atrocity of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls can only be achieved through mutual respect, transparency, and conscientious action.

Overview of the six pathways and core principles under Ontario's strategy

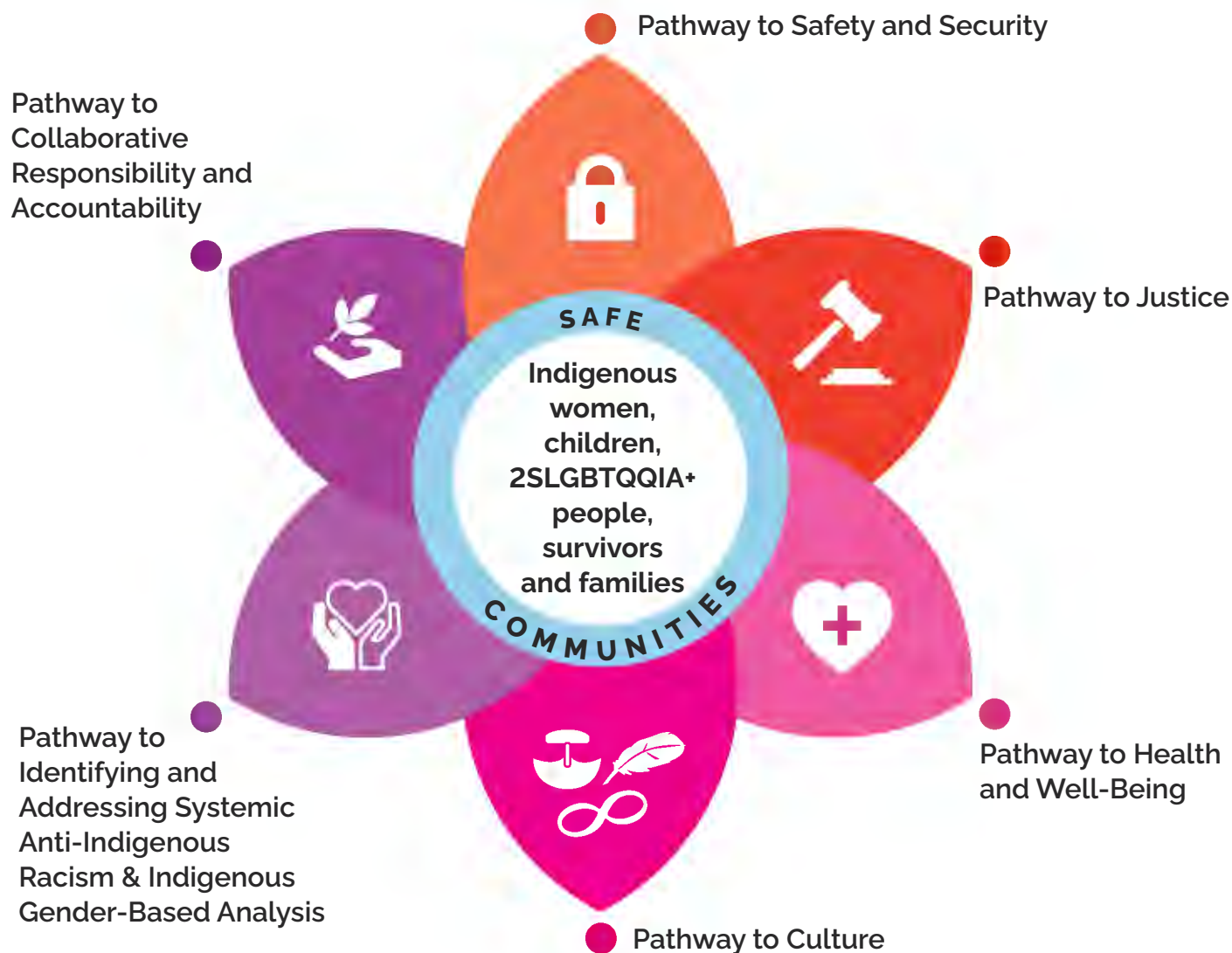


Figure 1: Ontario's Six Pathways to Safety

As part of Ontario's strategy, the province has committed to the following five key accountability principles:

- Transparency and collaboration
- An ongoing, continuous response and Ontario commitment
- Collaborative governance approach for oversight and progress reporting
- Long-term trust and relationship-building
- Clear response outcomes developed in dialogue with Indigenous partners

Since the release of Pathways to Safety, Ontario has taken steps to fulfill each of the accountability commitments included under the pathway to collaborative responsibility and accountability. Recognizing that the expertise of Indigenous women is essential to informing government efforts under the strategy, the mandate of the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council was extended until March 31, 2025.

Ontario also remains committed to working with the Council to find the best ways to support Women's Circles and Family and Survivors' Circles, which play a significant role in community-based healing. The circles are essential to fulfilling the goal of keeping women's voices at the centre of this work.

The province recognizes that further engagement with First Nation communities located in southern Ontario and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people is necessary to ensure the strategy will also reflect their voices and address their needs. As we look to 2022-23, we will continue to engage these partners to identify areas where sustained and focused action is required. The Ministry of Indigenous Affairs is working with the 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations and with Anishinabek Nation to hold targeted, culturally responsive, and community-led conversations on the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry, with both virtual and in-person engagement sessions commencing in 2022. This input will be used to inform continued implementation of Ontario's response to the National Inquiry.

Ontario is grateful for the Council's continued collaboration on this response and the members' leadership and efforts to end gender-based violence across the province.

Ganohkwásra Family Assault Support Services' Love Starts With Us Statements

"I once was told that where there is deep sadness only the strongest venture. It was with open arms that wrapped me in love when I first met members of the Love Starts With Us group. This was truly the grounding I needed since the murders of my sister-in-law and niece.

Through the Love Starts With Us program, I began the journey to my healing. Walking with baby steps and encouragement, I learned to acknowledge the murders and call it what it is. I was given tools and taught techniques on how to process thoughts of the mind while going through the weeks of the trial and everyday life afterwards.

Healing the mind, the body, the spirit and heart is a slow process, but necessary for myself; a wife, a mother, an aunt, so that I in turn can help my family along their healing journeys."

– Six Nations (SN) MMIWG Family Member/LSWU Group Member

"The love Starts With Us group has helped me in my personal life by staying connected with other MMIW families who share similar heartache as I. There is a different kind of strength and renewal in connecting with the families and being together with them.

As for my healing, the group has helped me with being comfortable enough to share my story and other things happening in daily life. There is no judgment from anyone and they all listen and offer advice. Without them, I wouldn't have the strength to keep going with both MMIW awareness or my own personal growth and walk-through grief after losing my Mom. Without LSWU, there would be nothing to look forward to, no extra love and definitely no extra family to keep everyone uplifted. They are all imperative to my overall well-being."

- SN MMIWG Family Member/LSWU Group Member

"Ganohkwkasra and the LSWU Program is an important part of my healing process; they helped me find my voice to speak my truths and that it is ok to cry as love does not die. I understand grief and they have given me the tools needed to walk through those tough days and hold my head high. The connections made with the other family members of the LSWU group that shared the same loss allows us to feel like we belong and we have a unique connectedness and relationship; it is a silent acknowledgement of "hey, I know what you are going through, you are not alone and I am here for you." The families in the group are my extended family who supported me during my heaviest times and when I needed it the most."

- SN MMIWG Family Member/LSWU Group Member

Additionally, in 2022, Ontario is committed to working with Indigenous communities and Council members to develop an Indigenous Gender-based Analysis (IGBA) approach, another cornerstone of Ontario's Pathways to Safety accountability framework. This commitment addresses calls for the province to develop culturally responsive, holistic, First Nation, Métis and Inuit-led, gender-informed policies and programs. The province will continue to work with partners on an approach that informs Pathways to Safety, as well as the design of all Ontario programs and services impacting Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Lastly, the province has committed to an annual progress meeting between Indigenous partners and the Ontario government, to be held following the release of this report. Ontario will continue to champion reciprocal, respectful and transparent reporting practices to strengthen our response over the strategy's duration.



MEASURING PROGRESS — TOGETHER

Measuring the progress made under Pathways to Safety calls for a performance measurement framework guided by First Nations, Métis and Inuit ways of knowing and the use of Indigenous gender-based analysis. It also requires Indigenous-led research methodologies so that progress can be tracked in ways that advance, rather than impede, the strategy's goals.

The work to develop a performance measurement framework centering Indigenous women, children, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons will continue throughout 2022, in partnership with the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council and other Indigenous partners to validate and refine a culturally responsive framework.

Ontario Native Women's Association's Breaking Free Report

In 1989, the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) released "Breaking Free: A Proposal for Change to Aboriginal Family Violence," which lays the foundation and call to action for Indigenous women to be centred in addressing violence against women. This report noted colonization has had Indigenous women spoken to, spoken for, and spoken about — but the solution requires women to speak for themselves. This seminal report provided a framework to address violence, and knowledge gained from this report continues to inform Ontario and Indigenous partner's work — including Pathways to Safety.

As part of this work, Ontario is also committed to a data strategy that considers and is integrated with other measurement and data collection efforts led by First Nation, Métis and Inuit governments and organizations, Indigenous research institutes and networks, and federal, provincial and territorial partners.



Leveraging data to measure the reduction of violence against Indigenous peoples is a long-term endeavor requiring meaningful collaboration. Indigenous data governance principles are an integral part of this process, and Ontario will work to confront the structural barriers that have prevented Indigenous communities from having access to and control of data. Ontario is committed to addressing some of the following anticipated data-related challenges:

- **Baseline data:** The absence of baseline data related to the heightened gender-based violence experienced by Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons has been a longstanding barrier to effectively measuring and tracking progress. Establishing an appropriate baseline to measure violence will inform more effective and targeted interventions.
- **Quantitative versus qualitative measures:** As compared to quantitative methods, qualitative methods represent forms of knowledge, data and lived experience that cannot be represented by numbers. As part of its accountability measures, Ontario will work to include qualitative elements that go beyond quantifiable explanations of progress.
- **Data sources:** Ontario will work alongside Indigenous-identified statistical organizations and other organizations, such as Statistics Canada, to obtain appropriate data to measure the progress of the strategy.

While work to measure progress is at a preliminary stage, it is underway. Ontario has begun to identify a prospective strategy, and population-level and program-level measures that will be further developed in the coming year. This collaborative work is a long-term initiative that will lay the foundation for government-wide accountability and relationship building. The strategy-level indicators and framework below will be used as a starting point to guide next steps.

Data Strategy and the National Action Plan

On June 3, 2021, the federal government released a National Action Plan in response to the National Inquiry that committed to the development of a supporting Data Strategy. As Canada advances this commitment, we will continue to engage with interprovincial and territorial colleagues to ensure Ontario's response can be strengthened by national data collection standards.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

VISION: All Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people live in safety and security, free from violence and exploitation, supported by accountable and ongoing systemic and structural changes

Pathway to
safety and
security

Pathway
to culture

Pathway to
health and
well-being

Pathway
to justice

Pathway to identifying and
addressing systemic anti-Indig-
enous racism and Indigenous
gender-based analysis

STRATEGY-LEVEL INDICATORS

- Government policies and programs support and prioritize Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals' interests and perspectives
- Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals and their families have increased access to a more effective and coordinated system of holistic supports
- Locally-designed, community-led solutions supported by Ontario to build safety for Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals through Indigenous-driven priorities, research, and public education
- Services are more inclusive and culturally responsive to meet the unique needs of Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals
- Systemic anti-Indigenous racism, misogyny, cissexism and heterosexism is targeted and reduced across all communities and sectors in Ontario

PRELIMINARY LONG-TERM OUTCOMES



Long-term decline in the prevalence and incidence of violence against Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals within Ontario, leading to its eventual elimination



Positive, system-wide change in safety, culture, health, anti-racism, and justice-related outcomes for Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people

Addressing violence through Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+-led approaches

Effectively measuring progress to end gender-based violence and the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls requires strengths-based approaches rooted in Indigenous women's and 2SLGBTQQIA+ leadership. The Ontario Native Women's Association has developed such an approach with their Theory of Change, Indigenous Gender-Based Analysis and She Is Wise Framework, which focuses on Indigenous women's safety, security and success to advance reconciliation and address the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry.

Serving as a practical foundation for action, the Theory of Change supports Indigenous women's safety and security by recognizing that Indigenous women and girls know best the solutions for their communities. Indigenous Gender-Based Analysis provides a holistic lens through which the unique experiences of Indigenous women, and distinct barriers and structures contributing to gender-based violence, can be highlighted and identified. The She Is Wise Framework builds on shared Indigenous women's stories and experiences to inform research, strategies, initiatives, and programs by and for women.

As Ontario works with the Council to measure meaningful progress under Pathways to Safety, these approaches, along with other diverse Indigenous-led methodologies and frameworks will inform Ontario's commitment to address and eliminate the root causes of violence in the province.

PATHWAY PROGRESS

The Pathways to Safety Strategy released in May 2021 includes initiatives across 12 ministries. Ontario continues to build on its initial commitment with new actions and initiatives that address the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice.

This first annual progress report highlights the progress and ongoing commitments made in under a year since the strategy's release. Much progress has been made in a short span of time, especially as Ontario and Indigenous partners and communities were heavily focused on addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

The progress report provides updates on key milestones since the strategy's release and outlines next steps. The profiled initiatives were identified by partner ministries and Council as priorities or had significant positive funding or progress changes.

MINISTRY KEY

EDU:	Ministry of Education	SOLGEN:	Ministry of the Solicitor General
IAO:	Ministry of Indigenous Affairs	MLTSD:	Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
MCU:	Ministry of Colleges and Universities	MMAH:	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
MOH:	Ministry of Health	MNDMNR:	Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry
MAG:	Ministry of the Attorney General	ARD-MCM:	Anti-Racism Directorate – Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism
MTO:	Ministry of Transportation		
MCCSS:	Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services		

PATHWAY TO SAFETY AND SECURITY

The pathway to safety and security under Ontario's strategy recognizes the unique circumstances faced by women, and the role of economic marginalization as a factor in violence. Initiatives aim to address the threats to physical, emotional, economic, social and cultural security, by promoting safety, healing and wellness through prevention-focused resources and programs.

Social and employment-related supports for urban Indigenous women (MCCSS, MLTSD)

Ontario is working with urban Indigenous organizations who provide comprehensive social and employment-related supports, including wraparound supportive housing, childcare, mental health supports and skills development, to sole-parent Indigenous women to create pathways to postsecondary education and employment. For example, in 2021-22, Ontario contributed to funding the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres' Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound program through the Canada-Ontario Workforce Development Agreement.

Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres' Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound Program

"When I joined the Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound (UIHB) program at my local Friendship Centre, I was struggling to find stability after leaving an abusive relationship with my son's father. I was financially dependent on my ex-partner which made leaving seem impossible at the time, but I knew I needed to break the cycle to give my son a brighter future. For months after we left, we stayed with friends and relatives while I looked for part-time work in order to save for our own place, but it felt like we would never save enough to afford the rising cost of rent.

I went to my local Friendship Centre looking for information on housing supplements and the staff told me about the UIHB program. Shortly after I started meeting with the UIHB program staff, they found us a small apartment. They also helped me to sign up for the financial assistance I need to pay for food and rent while I prepare to enroll in college. My son is also doing better in school with the support of the tutor and children's programming at the Friendship Centre.

Without the wraparound supports of the UIHB program and Friendship Centre, I don't know where my son and I would be living. I am so thankful to the UIHB program for giving us a safe home and connecting us with a community of other families like ours. I can finally see a bright future for our family."

– Urban Indigenous Homeward Bound Client

Supporting access to safe and affordable housing (MMAH)

Released in April 2019, the [Community Housing Renewal Strategy](#) is a multi-year provincial plan to work with sector partners to stabilize and grow the community housing sector. In July 2020, Ontario passed legislative amendments to the [Housing Services Act, 2011](#) to enable the development of a streamlined regulatory operating environment to improve access to community housing. The ministry is currently working with Service Managers, housing providers, Indigenous housing providers and Indigenous Program Administrators, plus sector stakeholders, including the violence against women sector, to develop regulations to ensure the continued availability of affordable housing in Ontario.



Transitional and Housing Support Program (MCCSS)

The Transitional and Housing Support Program (THSP) allows survivors to identify, access and maintain safe and secure housing and connects them to socially and culturally responsive wraparound services in their community.

The 2021 Budget includes an investment of \$18.5 million over three years in the Transitional and Housing Support Program (THSP) to support victims of domestic violence and survivors of human trafficking find and maintain housing and help transition to independence.

Through this enhanced investment, Indigenous survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking, including survivors accessing violence against women shelters on- and off-reserve, will be supported in accessing and navigating housing services from a culturally appropriate wraparound model.

This includes safety planning, counselling, health and wellness, social assistance, education, childcare, legal services and social assistance.

Anti-human Trafficking Strategy (MCCSS)

[Ontario's Anti-human Trafficking \(AHT\) Strategy](#), accompanied by an investment of up to \$307 million over five years, is focused on four key pillars with actions across government to raise awareness of the issue, protect victims and intervene early, support survivors and hold offenders accountable. In recognition that Indigenous women and girls experience increased vulnerability of being targeted by traffickers and comprise a disproportionate number of persons trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation due to the legacy of colonialism, Indigenous-specific initiatives are embedded throughout the strategy to help ensure a more holistic approach and response.

In 2021, the [Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy Act, 2021](#) was passed, requiring the province to maintain an AHT strategy and review/update it every five years. The act includes requirements for the government to consult with groups adversely impacted by human trafficking, including Indigenous communities and organizations, upon the strategy's five-year review. The act also sets out specific principles to guide the five-year review including cultural responsiveness and recognition of Indigenous traditional knowledge as a form of evidence, critical to informing Ontario's response to human trafficking.

Over the past year, the province has also implemented "Trainer Teams" to deliver anti-human trafficking training with Indigenous-specific components. The province intends to continue with training with the goal of training up to 500 individuals by end of 2022.

Youth Violence and Human Trafficking Prevention Program (YVHTTP) (MCCSS)

The [Youth Violence and Human Trafficking Prevention Program](#) (YVHTTP) is funded by the Gun and Gang Violence Action Fund (GGVAF). Launched in July 2021, the YVHTTP includes four Indigenous-led, community-based, anti-human trafficking prevention programs, focused on building strengths, skills, and resiliency in youth and their families.

Anti-human trafficking initiatives (MTO)

Ontario has also led anti-human trafficking (AHT) initiatives to raise awareness in the transportation sector, especially in the trucking industry. Initiatives include providing funding to the Women's Trucking Federation of Canada to develop an AHT training audio series and video content for commercial truck drivers, distributing "Truckers Against Trafficking" information cards at truck inspection stations and DriveTest centres and initiating AHT training for staff at the Ministry of Transportation. Human trafficking awareness resources have been provided to truck driver training schools that deliver Entry Level Training for Class A truck driver, and Ontario will make human trafficking awareness a mandatory requirement for truck driver training schools through the Entry Level Training curriculum by winter 2022.

Ontario has conveyed expectations regarding support for AHT actions to its agencies (Metrolinx, Owen Sound Transportation Company and Ontario Northland Transportation Commission) and has also worked with its agencies (Metrolinx and Ontario Northland Transportation Commission) to support efforts to educate front line staff about the signs of human trafficking.

Ontario will continue to develop training and awareness content for front-line transportation-sector employees and educate the travelling public through posting content at transportation hubs.

Ontario is improving the safety of transportation hubs where feasible with lighting, security cameras, site clearing and has posted the anti-trafficking hotline phone number at DriveTest centres, ONroute service centres, rest areas, ferry terminals and remote airports.

Draft Regional Transportation Plans include commitments to actions to improve safety and combat human trafficking in the transportation sector.

Supporting access to transportation (MTO)

In April 2020, Ontario launched the [Indigenous Transportation Initiatives Fund](#) (TIF), an annual competitive, application-based funding program open to Indigenous communities and organizations in Ontario interested in pursuing transportation-related projects or activities. Projects that highlight the safety of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are prioritized.

In 2021-2022, the program had seven successful recipients, including projects that focus on providing mobility services and increasing access to active transportation options for vulnerable community members.

Safe Internet Toolkit for Indigenous students and families (EDU)

The Safe Internet Toolkit for Indigenous students and families is an Indigenous-led initiative focused on preparing youth and families for the expansion of broadband to remote and rural communities, which may be accessing high-speed, secure internet for the first time. The toolkit will include public education and awareness for Indigenous students and families, including information to help individuals stay safe as they navigate increased access to the internet. The toolkit is a prevention mechanism to help address potentially negative repercussions of internet access (e.g., increased exposure to luring, increased exposure to sexually explicit images, increased social media use, increased vulnerability to cyber-bullying, and anti-Indigenous racism).

PATHWAY TO CULTURE

This pathway recognizes that ending the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons can only be accomplished through the restoration, reclamation and revitalization of Indigenous languages, cultures and identities. Actions under this pathway seek to promote education and connection to culture through grassroots, community and youth-centered approaches.

Indigenous Graduation Program – Supporting Indigenous youth in obtaining an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (EDU)

The Indigenous Graduation Coach Program provides funding to district school boards for the recruitment of Indigenous Graduation Coaches and other program-related costs to help Indigenous students obtain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma and successfully transition into postsecondary education, training or labour market opportunities. The program expanded from a pilot program with 19 boards in 2018-19 into a program now involving 27 boards across Ontario. In 2020-21, the scope of the program was broadened to include a Summer Grad Coach program in targeted boards to support elementary students from First Nation communities in their transition to high schools funded by the program. The Summer Grad Coach program received \$1M in funding for 2021-22 and 2022-23 from Ontario. In 2021-22, Ontario is also piloting an expansion of the Indigenous Graduation Coach program to Indigenous students in grades 7 and 8 in boards already participating in the program. This pilot aims to provide proactive supports for Indigenous students as they prepare to make the transition into secondary school and/or are preparing to transition from the First Nation/ federally operated school system into the provincial school system.

Translation of the G1 driver's knowledge test into Indigenous languages (MTO)

Beginning in 2020, Ontario has translated the G1 driver's knowledge test into three Indigenous languages — Ojibway, Oji-Cree and Cree. Since the release of Pathways to Safety, efforts have been underway to explore opportunities to translate the G1 knowledge test into additional Indigenous languages.

Funding for Indigenous students successfully accessing and transitioning to postsecondary education (MCU)

The Indigenous Targeted Initiatives Fund (ITIF) seeks to fund innovative projects that support access for, and the success of, Indigenous learners in postsecondary education and training. ITIF provides targeted funding and grants for postsecondary educational institutions, community-based organizations and other service delivery partners to promote positive postsecondary education and training opportunities, transitions and outcomes for Indigenous learners. Priority areas include support for Indigenous women in postsecondary education and Indigenous youth transitioning out of care. This initiative is currently funding 21 projects with Indigenous organizations, Indigenous Institutes, colleges and universities.

Promoting Safety and Success for Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Youth (EDU)

Promoting Safety and Success for Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ Youth is a new initiative that will support the development of programming in two areas identified in the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice, namely mentorship, leadership and education support for Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth, to support self-esteem, acceptance, and academic success, and competency training and resources for parents, caregivers, and foster parents regarding Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ identities, with a particular focus on the barriers to safety for these Indigenous youth. This initiative will be delivered between 2021-22 and 2022-23 with an Indigenous partner organization.



Master Education Agreement (EDU)

The [Master Education Agreement](#) (MEA), signed in 2017, established a formal relationship between Ontario, the Kinooaadziwin Education Body (KEB) and 23 participating Anishinabek First Nations. It confirms the parties' commitment to work collaboratively towards increased First Nation student success and well-being in Anishinabek Education System (AES) and provincially funded schools.

Funding has been provided to the KEB since 2018 to support the implementation of the MEA, including for the promotion of Anishinabek student success, well-being and transitions between and into AES schools and provincially-funded schools; fostering engagement and participation of students, parents, families and communities; enhancing collaboration between the AES, Ontario and school boards, including data and information sharing; and supporting the advancement of Anishinabek language and culture, and the knowledge of Anishinabek First Nation histories, perspectives and contributions within AES and provincially-funded schools.

In August 2021, Ontario announced a three-year funding commitment to the KEB, beginning in 2021-22 to support the implementation of the Master Education Agreement.

Indigenous-focused curriculum revisions (EDU) **NEW**

On September 29, 2021, in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, Ontario announced that revisions are underway, in collaboration with Indigenous partners, to introduce mandatory Indigenous-focused learning to the Social Studies, Grades 1-3 curriculum, with an anticipated implementation date of September 2023.

In addition, Ontario announced that Inuktitut is now an available option as a language of instruction at the elementary and secondary level within the Indigenous languages curriculum.



Honouring Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people (MNDMNRF) NEW

Ontario is providing investment through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, to the City of Kenora to build Rotary Peace Park. This investment will help redevelop a green space as a place to reflect and honour missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Funding will be used to redevelop underutilized, centrally located park space and is a tangible commitment of respect, reflection and reconciliation.

PATHWAY TO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The Pathway to Health and Well-being under Ontario's strategy approaches health holistically, recognizing that safety, health and culture are intrinsically intertwined. Actions under this pathway acknowledge that engaging in culturally safe healing approaches strengthens individuals and families by fostering relationships and community connectivity.

Shelter Capacity Building and Expanded Healing Lodge Services (MCCSS) NEW

The [Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy](#), in place since 1994 and overseen by MCCSS, MOH and IAO, continues to provide holistic and culturally responsive supports to help Indigenous individuals, families, and communities address the impacts of intergenerational trauma, family violence and violence against Indigenous women and children.

Additional investments under the Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy were announced in October 2021 to support healing and address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ persons, including the provision of over \$2 million in annualized funding to support:

- The Aboriginal Shelters of Ontario to provide training and capacity building activities for the Indigenous women's shelter sector and build cultural competency in non-Indigenous agencies and sectors (e.g., justice)
- Three new/expanded healing lodges in the Parry Sound corridor, the Dryden area and southwestern Ontario.



Treatment and Healing Centres (MOH, MCCSS)

Ontario is supporting 12 Indigenous-led mental health and addictions treatment and healing centres across the province. These centres serve a range of populations, including youth, families, and adults, and includes one centre dedicated to providing services to precariously housed women and families. These centres are in various stages of implementation. Since the release of Pathways to Safety, the Six Nations Egq̃wadiya`dagenha` Land Based Healing Centre and the Wakenagun Youth Healing Lodge in Timmins have opened. Two additional centres are expected to launch in the coming months, including a youth site in Sioux Lookout and an adult program in Constance Lake First Nation.

Child Welfare Redesign Strategy (distinct Indigenous approach) (MCCSS)

Ontario's [Child Welfare Redesign](#) includes a distinct Indigenous approach, embodied by the [Ontario Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy](#) (OICYS), co-developed by Indigenous partners and service providers and the province. The redesign supports a vision where, in alignment with the OICYS and the Preamble to the [Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017](#), First Nations, Inuit and Métis children should be happy, healthy, resilient, grounded in their cultures and languages and thriving as individuals and as members of their families, communities and nations. Through the multi-year strategy, Ontario is working with representatives of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples to support the development and implementation of Indigenous-led models for child and family services that are high-quality, community-led, prevention-based and culturally appropriate. Throughout 2021-22, Ontario advanced numerous processes, including bilateral and trilateral (with Canada) negotiations, to deliver on this pathway.

On March 3, 2022, Bill 84, [Fewer Fees, Better Services Act, 2022](#) was passed. This bill includes amendments to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017. These amendments would provide a framework to:

- Distinguish customary care from residential care in specified circumstances
- Implement holistic and wraparound supports for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families
- Enhance the role of community-based, prevention-focused Indigenous service providers within Ontario's child and family services system.

As this work continues into 2022-23, the Child Welfare Redesign, through Community Conversations, will place particular emphasis on elevating and listening to the voices of Indigenous women, children, youth and families, as well as the voices of other communities overrepresented in child welfare.

Indigenous Midwifery Program (MOH, MCCSS)

The Indigenous Midwifery Program (IMP), first introduced in 2016, exclusively supports Indigenous-led midwifery care in urban, rural, northern and on-reserve Indigenous communities. The program provides culturally safe prenatal, intrapartum and postpartum care programs and services to support youth and expectant families (e.g., parenting classes, breastfeeding support) and community education to support youth and expectant families to make informed choices around reproductive health. There are currently 10 IMPs across the province. After a successful call for proposals in 2020-21, Ontario launched the 2021-22 call for proposals in June 2021. Applicants were invited to submit proposals and illustrate how their midwifery program would demonstrate service delivery and address the needs of their community. Additionally, there was an opportunity for communities to apply for one-time Development Funding and existing IMPs to apply for expansions to their programs. Applications were due on September 3, 2021 and are currently under review.

Roadmap to Wellness (MOH)

In March 2020, Ontario released [Roadmap to Wellness](#), the province's mental health and addictions (MHA) strategy. Supported by a commitment to invest \$3.8 billion in MHA services and supports over ten years, Roadmap to Wellness is a detailed plan to create a comprehensive and connected MHA service system that provides people within Ontario consistent care where and when they need it.

Since 2019-20, Ontario has announced \$525 million in net new annualized funding under Roadmap to Wellness, including over \$41 million dedicated to Indigenous MHA. As part of the \$175 million invested in 2021-22 through Roadmap to Wellness, Ontario announced \$16 million for cross-government investments in Indigenous services including wellness supports for students, Indigenous-specific victim (healing) services and development of an Indigenous-driven opioid strategy to address the increase in opioid use, and opioid related deaths. This investment builds on the \$12.8 million invested in 2020-21 to immediately expand and enhance culturally appropriate mental health and addictions services for Indigenous peoples and communities across Ontario, and \$12.7 million invested in 2019-20 to expand services to address mental health and addictions needs of Indigenous peoples, families, and communities.

Following the release of Pathways to Safety, additional programs have been announced and are in development with Indigenous community partners, including Specialized Mental Health & Addictions Anti-Human Trafficking Liaisons, a Youth Mental Health and Recreation Program, Mental Health Training & Supports for Community Workers, a Health Navigators Program Enhancement and an Indigenous Care Coordinator Pilot in Thunder Bay.

As Ontario continues to implement the Pathways to Safety Strategy, the Roadmap's Indigenous-specific commitments will be rolled out with Indigenous partners. This includes new healing lodges for trafficked youth which Ontario has been engaging Indigenous partners about in order to support funding decisions and program design.

System coordinators under the Roadmap to Wellness (MOH)

Under the Roadmap to Wellness, Ontario committed to supporting 10 Indigenous organizations to provide Indigenous Mental Health and Addictions System Coordinators. These system coordinators work to improve service pathways, client journeys, and coordination between health providers supporting Indigenous communities, as well as offering technical planning expertise and advice to improve the mental health and addictions systems for Indigenous communities.

Mental health and addictions supports for Indigenous communities (IAO, MOH, EDU, MCCSS, MAG, MCU, SOLGEN) NEW

On October 29th, 2021, the province announced \$20 million in mental health and addictions and trauma supports for Indigenous communities. The investment responds to increased mental health and trauma support needs as a result of COVID-19 and in light of the identification of multiple residential school burials. Through investments in programs and supports such as the Family Well-Being program, the Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy, Indigenous-specific Healing Victim services and specific programs for Indigenous women, justice-involved youth and students, the funding is supporting Indigenous people experiencing violence and the impacts of intergenerational trauma so they can live safely and heal from trauma. These mental health and addictions-related investments are directly responsive to a number of pathways outlined under the Pathways to Safety strategy, including:

- Pathway to health and well-being: \$10 million of the \$20 million investment was delivered using a community-based allocation model that supports Indigenous communities and organizations to apply funds to the mental health and addiction areas of greatest identified need. The allocation model also supports investment in Indigenous-led and designed programs and services.
- Pathway to safety and security and pathway to justice: Program-focused investments in Indigenous-specific Healing Victim Services and [Family Information Liaison Unit](#) workers ensure mental health supports for victims, survivors and their families, including Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who have experienced violence. These supports respond to the calls for access to culturally relevant and trauma-informed mental health and addiction services for Indigenous survivors and witnesses to violence.

Community-based mental health and wellness programs (MOH)

Ontario supports Indigenous-led mental health and wellness programs offering a wide range of services to Indigenous communities, including programs that deliver services to women and their families that are developed and led by the Ontario Native Women's Association, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, Chigamik Community Health Centre and Georgian Bay Native Women's Association, among other providers. Since 2021, 34 programs have been moved into sustainable base funding agreements to support long-term culturally appropriate service delivery that addresses emerging mental health and addictions needs.

Addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth and women in the justice system (MCCSS)

Ontario is funding four Indigenous community-based organizations (Ontario Native Women's Association, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, Métis Nation of Ontario, and Inuuqatigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families) to provide and lead mental health and wellness services to justice-involved Indigenous youth. Currently, Ontario is co-developing promotional and information materials and sessions to support the organizations to receive more referrals from justice stakeholders. Ontario is also working collaboratively to develop and update service delivery data elements and outcomes that are holistic and responsive to Indigenous partners perspectives and experiences.

PATHWAY TO JUSTICE

The Pathway to Justice recognizes the need to re-establish relationships, advance structural change, and build trust between Indigenous peoples and justice institutions. Actions under this pathway recognize the need for targeted, Indigenous women-focused interventions to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous women in policing and justice systems, as well as systems-wide transformation informed by Indigenous perspectives.



Nishnawbe Aski Police Services Survivor Assistance Support Program

The initial purpose of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Police Services Survivor Assistance Support Program (SASP) was to fill a gap observed between business hour operated support services and police contact when reacting to an investigation involving sexual or domestic violence with Indigenous women in northern and remote communities in Ontario. The program continues to provide immediate contact with survivors of a sexual and/or domestic assault and has enhanced services to help victims navigate the justice system and provide ongoing care before, during and after any court proceedings or trial process, assessing the health and wellbeing of the complainant, and making referrals to access other social and health services. The SASP team works to address the mental, physical and emotional state of victims in a culturally appropriate manner and to support the delivery of operational police-based services in NAN communities seeking assistance in responding effectively to violence. The scope of services and resources provided under the program include: a bail safety program; community education and training; missing persons; officer support; human trafficking; sexual assault; and domestic violence.

Specialized abuse issues investigative supports for First Nations police services (SOLGEN)

Ontario is providing funding to build capacity of First Nations police services to deliver specialized abuse issues investigative supports (including domestic violence and human trafficking). Abuse issues investigations by First Nations police services will enhance trauma-informed responses and culturally responsive policing to better meet the needs of at-risk Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. The development of this initiative was informed directly by First Nations police services. Many services have successfully begun to recruit officers in early 2022 and develop/enhance partnerships with First Nation community services and supports for at-risk Indigenous women and girls.

Social Navigators for First Nations police services (SOLGEN)

In response to the need for holistic and trauma-informed supports to connect First Nation community members with available services, Ontario has funded First Nation police services to establish Social Navigators within their services. Social Navigators are civilian coordinators that help victims and at-risk individuals through partnerships with service agencies and community supports in areas of concern (e.g., mental health, addictions, homelessness, etc.). This initiative was informed by the success of an existing Social Navigator program within the United Chiefs and Councils of Manitoulin Anishnaabe Police Service and in collaboration with First Nations police services across Ontario. Services began hiring Social Navigators and are expected to be fully operational by Spring 2022.

Indigenous women wellness and enhanced services (Wewena ngiiwemaa) (SOLGEN)

Indigenous women wellness and enhanced services, initially announced in Pathways to Safety, are being provided to better address the specific needs of incarcerated Indigenous women both within institutions and through their transition back into the community. These services could include counselling, culturally-relevant programming, traditional ceremonies, working with domestic violence and human trafficking survivors as well as providing community reintegration, planning and support. The initiative will operate at Fort Frances, Vanier, Thunder Bay and Monteith institutions. Ontario is currently developing a call for proposals.

Makwa Patrol (SOLGEN, IAO)

As announced under Pathways to Safety, Ontario is providing funds to the Makwa Patrol, a patrol service intended to enhance community and individual safety in the Kenora area, including for Indigenous women. The Makwa Patrol aims to facilitate access to community-based resources and supports and be a means to divert and decrease the number of Indigenous peoples in the Ontario justice system. Ontario is developing an agreement for two full years of funding.

Victim Support Grant Program (SOLGEN)

In June 2021, Ontario announced \$5 million over two years for the launch of the new Victim Support Grant (VSG) program. VSG will enhance capacity to support victims and survivors of intimate partner violence and human trafficking through increased collaboration with local organizations and communities. In recognition that there is a disproportionate impact of intimate partner violence and human trafficking on Indigenous communities, specific consideration was given for projects that were culturally responsive and designed to meet the needs of Indigenous survivors and victims. Nearly half of the recommended projects include an Indigenous-focus or collaboration with the Indigenous community. Projects are expected to launch over the upcoming year.

Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Programs (MAG)

Indigenous-specific [Intimate Partner Violence Prevention \(PVP\) programs](#) are culturally appropriate education and counselling programs designed to prevent and address domestic/intimate partner violence. Since the release of Pathways to Safety, these programs have continued to provide services to Indigenous women and families as part of Ontario's concerted effort to address and reduce violence against Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Kenora Justice Centre (MAG)

In 2019, Ontario announced the development of a [Justice Centre](#) in Kenora. To inform the centre's design, Ontario created the Kenora Justice Centre Advisory Council, an advisory body consisting of Indigenous leadership, judiciary and justice partners, community leaders, health and social service organizations and housing providers. Following the release of Pathways to Safety, the Advisory Council has continued to work with Ontario to develop a Justice Centre model that will include Indigenous Restorative Justice and trauma-informed criminal processes developed in conversation with Indigenous partners. Steps to develop the centre will continue, including affiliated activities to inform the design and establishment of its services and supports to ensure Indigenous people's experiences in the justice system are improved.

Indigenous community-based programming (MCCSS)

Ontario is working in collaboration with Indigenous communities and other organizations to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in Ontario's justice system by funding culturally relevant programs, such as prevention initiatives and community-based programs for Indigenous youth in, or at risk of, conflict with the law. These include restorative justice initiatives, extrajudicial measures and sanctions, probation services, non-residential attendance centres, reintegration services, community workers and mental health and wellness services.

Justice Collaboration Initiative (MCCSS)

As part of the Justice Collaboration Initiative launched in Spring 2021, Ontario partnered with Grand Council Treaty #3 Representative Services and Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation to deliver two new diversion programs to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in the justice system.

A new Community of Practice (CoP) was launched in February 2022 to support and inform program improvements, share best practices, co-design tools to develop program evaluation, discuss referral processes and oversee the programs' success and more. The CoP is a collaborative partnership between communities and organizations.

PATHWAY TO IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING ANTI-INDIGENOUS RACISM AND INDIGENOUS GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS

Indigenous cultural safety training for healthcare professionals and administrators (MOH)

Indigenous Cultural Safety training is designed to enhance knowledge of First Nations, Inuit and Métis history, culture and challenges affecting Indigenous health to improve patient experience and person-centred care. To date, over 22,400 individuals in the Ontario health sector have taken online ISC training.

In October 2021, the Indigenous Primary Health Care Council launched their new “Foundations of Indigenous Cultural Safety” training course, the first course in their new training program Anishinaabe Mino’ayaawin – People in Good Health.

This course has been created for individuals working in the health care system to learn the importance of adopting culturally safe and appropriate practices when serving Indigenous clients and patients.

Identification and commemoration of Indian Residential School burials (IAO) NEW

An initial investment of \$10 million over three years was announced in June 2021 to support the identification, investigation, protection, maintenance and commemoration of burials at Indian Residential Schools and surrounding areas. In November 2021, the province committed an additional \$10 million to support this painful but necessary work. This increase was in response to calls from Indigenous leadership that additional funding would be required to address the complexity and importance of this work at the 18 federally recognized Indian Residential School sites in Ontario.



Identification and commemoration of Indian Residential School burials (IAO) NEW

Ontario recognizes that the heartbreaking work to identify, investigate, protect and commemorate Indian Residential School burials and cemeteries across the province must be Indigenous-led, community-supported and undertaken with respect for the pace, timelines and objectives of Indigenous partners.

As an early step, the province has been engaging with Indigenous leaders to seek guidance on the best use of provincial funds and establishing provincial and site-specific processes to guide this work. It will take a significant amount of time to ensure the work is done properly, in a manner that respectfully responds to the wishes of survivors, affected families and communities, and honours the lives lost.

Through engagement with Indigenous partners, Ontario has also identified provincial supports to assist with investigations, site protection, and commemoration. This includes the release of 1,800 records related to Indian Residential Schools to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, as well as the expertise of the Centre for Forensic Sciences, Archivist of Ontario and the Chief Coroner of Ontario, who can assist with the related research, analysis and technical field work required and ensure that this critical work is done to the highest standard possible.

We know this initial work is the first step in a much more extensive process, pending the wishes of the affected families and communities. Ontario is committed to providing appropriate supports at every stage and to seeing this work through to completion.

Anti-Racism Anti-Hate Grant Program (ARD-MCM)

In July 2020, Ontario announced a \$1.6 million investment over two-years to create a new [Anti-Racism Anti-Hate \(ARAH\) Grant Program](#) starting in 2021-22. The grant program focuses on supporting community-led initiatives that will increase public education and awareness on the impact of racism.

Ontario is continuing to deepen and strengthen relationships with First Nation, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous leaders and organizations to seek input and advice on the delivery of the grant program as it relates to anti-Indigenous racism initiatives.

The ARAH call for proposals was launched in September 2021. In the 2021 Fall Economic Statement investment under this program was doubled from \$1.6 million to \$3.2 million. Funding for this program will be issued beginning in winter 2022 and Ontario continues to work closely with Indigenous partners to collaborate on the delivery of Indigenous-focused initiatives.

Anti-Racism Strategy review (ARD-MCM) NEW

Ontario's [Anti-Racism Strategic Plan](#) was established in 2017 to identify and advise government policies, decisions and programs to advance racial equity in Ontario. A legislated review of the strategy is currently underway and includes a multi-faceted public engagement approach, including consultations with communities adversely impacted by racism.

Since the spring of 2021, Ontario has been working closely with First Nation, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous leaders and organizations to determine partner-specific approaches to engagement and to gather community feedback in support of the review.

Guided by review feedback, Ontario will continue to work in collaboration with Indigenous partners to implement initiatives that work towards addressing anti-Indigenous racism and advancing equity for Indigenous peoples in Ontario.

Ontario's anti-Indigenous racism initiatives (ARD, IAO, MCCSS)

The crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQIA+ people is intrinsically connected to hate, anti-Indigenous racism, and the intergenerational impacts of residential schools. As part of Ontario's whole-of-government response to the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry, the province is working to develop a holistic, integrated approach to these issues by interweaving Pathways to Safety with the government's commitment to a review of Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan and ongoing investments supporting the identification, investigation, protection and commemoration of Indian Residential School burials. As Ontario continues to implement Pathways to Safety in 2022 and beyond, the province is dedicated to working with Indigenous partners across these commitments to create a strengthened, interwoven and impactful response targeting the roots of violence and hate.



THE PATH FORWARD: ADDRESSING GAPS AND SUPPORTING HEALING

As we reflect on the progress made since the release of the strategy and consider the critical needs of Indigenous women, children and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals, we acknowledge that concerted and sustained action is necessary to end this crisis. Ontario will continue to work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis leaders to jointly identify areas to collect baseline data using Indigenous-led principles and approaches, develop relevant indicators, and shape clear and meaningful outcomes to track consequential progress on the strategy. Ontario will also continue to improve on specific areas of its response, specifically:

- Building on and expanding collaboration with Indigenous communities
- Continuing to invest in programs that address anti-Indigenous racism
- Filling critical data gaps identified by partners
- Responding to areas of the Calls for Justice where we know there is more work to be done, including in policing and justice.

Ontario will release another annual public report in 2023, charting further progress made and providing updates on initiatives addressing the Calls for Justice. It will again be developed in collaboration with Indigenous communities and Ontario ministries. Ontario's close relationship with Indigenous partners has been instrumental in delivering on the outlined actions and will continue to be important as the strategy progresses.

CONCLUSION

Working together to address injustice requires deep, thoughtful and transparent accountability and relationships. Ontario reiterates its commitment to building a province where all Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people live in safety, free from violence and exploitation.

We would like to thank the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council for its invaluable guidance. The voices, expertise and advice of Indigenous women will continue to lead our way. We will diligently undertake the work ahead so present and future generations of Indigenous women and families can live their lives in safety and prosperity. We will achieve this vision collaboratively — through accountable and respectful relationships — informed by the power and place of Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.